



SACP Central Committee Discussion Paper

Issued by the SACP for internal discussion in preparation for the 2nd Special National Congress

Building working class hegemony on the terrain of a national democratic struggle

September 2009

Part 2



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4. Four key systemic realities that require radical transformation

There are least four key (and mutually reinforcing) systemic realities within our post-1994 democracy that continue, daily, to reproduce capitalist power and racialised, working class and broader popular poverty and marginalisation:

4.1 First - our economic growth trajectory

Our growth trajectory which remains locked largely into the same, century-long trajectory, previously associated with white minority rule (CST). Over the last several years, the SACP has devoted considerable attention to this matter – characterising the growth path as:

- i. Excessively primary commodity export dependent
- ii. Excessively dependent on luxury and capital goods imports
- iii. Which, taken together, have reproduced a weak national (and regional) market; and
- iv. An underdeveloped light manufacturing sector.
- v. It is a growth path that has been (and remains) dominated by very high levels of monopoly concentration and collusion– in the mining, financial, energy, chemical, agro-processing, steel and construction sectors amongst others.
- vi. Monopoly dominance has often crippled medium and small enterprise development in the manufacturing, small farming and food processing sectors - all labour intensive in potential.

- vii. The growth path has also become increasingly capital intensive to the detriment of labour intensity;
- viii. It has relied on a narrow band of artisanal skills (historically white), and has neglected systematic skilling on a broader basis
- ix. And our growth path has had a predatory (sub-imperialist) relationship to our wider region – further undermining balanced development and a wider regional market.

Programmatically the SACP has consistently proposed – over the past decade and more – that the radical transformation of this systemic reality requires, amongst other things:

- i. A state-led industrial policy programme that prioritises job creation;
- ii. The alignment of trade policy to our industrial policy, with the latter playing the lead role;
- iii. The alignment of macro-economic policies to a new developmental growth path
- iv. An effective state planning capacity;
- v. The strategic deployment and coordination of SOEs and DFIs to advance a different developmental growth path, with a particular focus on infrastructure investment;
- vi. The progressive transformation of the critical financial sector – to ensure developmental investment

4.2 Second – Education and Training

15 years into our post-apartheid democracy we have become increasingly aware that the FORMAL creation of a single educational dispensation masks the material reality of a highly unequal and inequitable system that actively reproduces enormous race, class, and (to some extent) gendered inequalities. While most of our children go to school within the same formal system, the quality of education, the prospects of getting into tertiary education, or of obtaining future employment, even the chances of getting any extra-curricular sporting or cultural activity hinge on WHERE you go to school, which, in turn depends on where you live (see below) and WHAT you can afford. Similar realities apply to tertiary level education and FET – if you are black and of working class origins and you make it to the tertiary level by some miracle, you still face huge race and class barriers.

One study commissioned by the Ford Foundation revealed that of the 6,8 million 18-24 year-olds in South Africa in 2007, 2,8 million of these were neither in an

educational institution, nor in employment or training. This is a huge wastage of the resources and energy of our youth and a ticking time bomb.

The SACP and YCL, together with our Alliance and MDM partners and with the new government administration, have succeeded in making the radical transformation of education and training one of five key priority pillars. Programmatically this requires, amongst other things:

- a) Intensified effort towards strengthening and expanding early childhood development and Grade R
- b) The need to increase post-school options for our youth
- c) Revamping a diversified college sector
- d) Intensification of adult education and training, including work-place training
- e) Increased access to and success in higher education
- f) The training and upgrading of teaching professionals, and the revitalisation of teacher training colleges.

As with the other key sites of systemic reproduction of deep-seated inequality, radical transformation of the education sector can only occur through a combination of mass-driven and state-led activism – with organised labour and communities playing a leading role.

4.3 Third – the spatial reproduction of racialised (and class and gendered) underdevelopment and inequality

Just as with education, where the FORMAL establishment of a unitary system disguises the ACTUALITY of a highly unequal reality – so with the geographical/spatial features of our post-apartheid SA. Formally, we now have a unitary SA and a single citizenship where we all have rights of free mobility and access. We have formally abolished group areas, ethnic zoning, influx control, labour preference areas, curfews and Bantustans. But what was once actively planned by apartheid's architects to control the location and mobility of the black majority is now perpetuated on "automatic pilot":

- i. By the capitalist land and housing market, by speculative property development dominating town-"planning", and by the power of big capital and suburban elites to influence the nature of "development" (eg. over-investment in car-biased, suburban-oriented freeway engineering projects and shopping malls to the detriment of mass transit, public transport infrastructure and mixed income housing and mixed-use settlement patterns).

- ii. By the neo-liberal “global city” paradigm that has dominated administrations in many of our cities – over-emphasising tourism and global connectivity, international conference centres and the hosting of global events to the relative detriment of transforming the lives of the majority of actual metro-citizens.
- iii. By the skewed infrastructure grid (water, roads, rail, energy, IT), directed towards serving the interests of enclaves of privilege and the water, energy and freight logistic needs of monopoly capital, “lowering the costs to doing business...for business” (eg. the provision of 25-year cheap electricity contracts to multi-national aluminium corporations; or over-investment in airports and mineral export rail-lines to the detriment of rural branch lines).
- iv. By “communal” land ownership dominated by conservative patriarchal “traditional” leadership, in which nominal citizens are reduced to the status of “traditional subjects”, with a particularly discriminatory impact on rural women.
- v. By the failures of our “willing-seller, willing-buyer” land reform programme – and the general failure to take seriously rural development based on small family and cooperative holdings.
- vi. By the liberalisation of commercial agriculture under the domination of agro-processing and retail monopolies, and the consequent demise of small scale (albeit largely white-owned but labour intensive) family farms, and the related mass evictions from farms, the demise of rural towns and local economies;
- vii. By the perpetuation of dormitory (and informal) township settlement patterns, distant from work, and from quality educational and major public service resources. The 3.1 million RDP houses we have built over the past 15 years have unintentionally reinforced the reproduction of this spatial inequality.

The combined impact of all of these spatial factors (many of which have been accelerated in the post-1994 period) have compounded and entrenched monopoly capital’s hegemony in our country, while reproducing systemic spatial (and still excessively RACIALISED) inequality. Exorbitant land and property prices in favourable localities, for instance, are much more prohibitive barriers to entry for the largely black urban and rural working class and poor than any apartheid-era pass-office functionary.

The continued post-1994 reproduction of the dormitory township and dormitory rural reserve settlement pattern lies at the heart of many grave challenges. These perpetuated spatial realities play an active role in locking the majority of our people into overcrowded and under-resourced public services (schools, colleges, clinics, infrastructure).

They also place a huge mobility and access burden, in terms of time, personal security and money, on the working class and poor (and especially women) as they seek to access education or work. Our ANC election manifesto commits to ensuring that no household spends more than 10% of income on transport. But, currently 30% of households (the poorest, of course) are spending 11% and more, and of these more than half (18% of total households) are spending more than 20% of income on public transport to work. To add injury to insult this public transport is typically unreliable and unsafe. Elsewhere, the families of workers and the rural poor simply have no access to public transport at all. In a rural province like KZN nearly 15% of all learners (and we can assume that they are almost all poor and black) spend more than an hour-and-a-half walking to school and back, further compounding the many other disadvantages they confront.

So what is to be done to democratise (and de-racialise) our spatial economy?

Writing in 1872 on the failure of capitalism to solve the housing crisis of the working class – even in England, the most developed capitalist economy of the day - Frederick Engels notes:

“On its own admission, therefore, the bourgeois [philanthropic] solution of the housing question has come to grief – it has come to grief owing to the antithesis of town and country. And with this we have arrived at the kernel of the problem. The housing question can only be solved when society has been sufficiently transformed for a start to be made **towards abolishing the antithesis between town and country**, which has been brought to an extreme point by present-day capitalist society. Far from being able to abolish this antithesis, capitalist society on the contrary is compelled to intensify it day by day.” (Engels, “The Housing Question”).

What Engels is underlining here is the imperative of a **systematic transformation** of the capitalist economy, without which various well-intentioned, sectoral reform measures inevitably come to grief. Our own post-1994 low-cost housing programme is a case in point. We started out with a housing unit backlog of some 3 million (this is the 1994 **Reconstruction and Development Programme** estimate – see para.2.5.1, p.22). 15 years later, incredibly, we have actually built 3.1 million subsidised houses for the poor, 2,7million of them free. Yet, the housing backlog remains more or less where it was when we began, and the crisis of overcrowding, of backyard shacks and informal settlements has increased. Why? The RDP housing programme in the absence of an effective and aggressive agrarian development and land reform programme (not to mention the collapse of agrarian economies throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa) has simply acted as a magnet, drawing millions of economic refugees from untransformed rural areas in distress.

We cannot address the housing problem without addressing the “antithesis between town and country”.

In fact, we can take this further. We cannot address the crisis in the former Bantustan areas without simultaneously addressing the antithesis between the “white” countryside and these former reserve areas. We cannot address the crisis in the “white” countryside without addressing the antithesis between it and monopoly (including multi-national) capital. We cannot address the township crisis without simultaneously addressing the rural question AND the antithesis between marginalized dormitory townships and the larger cities and towns of which they are satellites. We cannot address the crisis in our towns and cities, without addressing the antithesis between the social needs of the majority of their inhabitants and the “world class city” logic of global capitalism.

Following resolutions of the ANC national conference (and proposals made by the SACP), the new government has made some initial progress in seeking to address many of these problems through the **reconfiguration** of ministries and departments, and through a continued commitment to a major **state-led infrastructure programme**. In particular we can single out:

- The dedicated attention to **rural development** (one of five key priorities in our election manifesto), and the establishment of a new **Department of Rural Development**;
- The re-naming of the old Housing Department as **the Human Settlement Department** – hopefully to underline the point that we are seeking to approach the built environment in a more integrated way than simply as the “delivery” of rows and rows of low cost houses that bear an uncanny resemblance to the matchbox houses formerly delivered by the apartheid regime;
- The establishment of a **planning ministry** with a key mandate to consider the “**spatial economy**” – and the commitment to review the neo-liberal National Spatial Development Perspective document.

However, the danger still exists that rural development will be approached as a largely ex-Bantustan affair, in isolation from the overall transformation of all of our rural areas, and of the relationship between rural and urban. Likewise, the danger exists that human settlements will be seen as essentially a township matter in isolation from the overall democratisation of space and mobility in our towns and cities.

Programmatically (in order to radically transform the systemic features of our spatial reality) we need to:

- i. Ensure a working class hegemony over the process of an accelerated and integrated rural development process
- ii. Actively engage with the review of the future of provinces and local government, to ensure that the capacity to radically transform/democratise our spatial realities is enhanced;
- iii. Ensure that a key mandate of the Planning Commission is the strategic planning for and monitoring of the democratisation of space and mobility
- iv. Use the new Human Settlements Department to ensure that we move away from dormitory townships and suburban sprawl to a more democratic development of mixed income, mixed use and, where relevant, medium density built environments across our towns and cities.
- v. Promote public transport as a catalyser for spatial democratisation and transformation, and reclaim public control and regulation over urban infrastructure (including routes and ranks)
- vi. Ban the sale of publicly-owned land to property speculators and use much more aggressively property rates, local business taxes and other fiscal means to ensure better cross-subsidisation of municipal public services – including public transport infrastructure and operations.
- vii. Ensure that we implement radical municipal legislation that calls for participatory planning and budgeting;
- viii. Mobilise popular forces in favour of the above issues, and connect local protests (eg. around housing, land, public services, transport) to a broader transformational agenda so that the wider politics of the built environment become campaign issues –rather than simply focusing on “delivery” into “townships”.
- ix. Ensure that our state-led R787bn infrastructure programme contributes to the democratisation of space – rather than reinforcing current spatial inequalities through misallocation of excessive resources to serving the current capitalist accumulation path and its key enclaves.

4.4 Fourth – the Radical Transformation of Health-Care

Racial, class and gendered inequality are also massively reproduced in SA by a “two-tier” health-care system. On the one hand there is a private health-care system that uses 60% of financial and medical personnel resources, but services a mere 14% of our population (basically those with Medical Aids). On the other hand, we have an under-funded, and over-whelmed public health system, further burdened by the HIV/AIDS and TB pandemics.

The ANC-led alliance over the past year has begun to place this radical transformation challenge clearly on the agenda with the commitment to rolling out a National Health Insurance (NHI) system. The SACP fully supports this move which will mark a significant step in the direction of basing health-care provision (as the ANC NEC NHI briefing document puts it) “on the basis of from each according to their ability (to pay), to each according to their need” – in other words it will mark a major step in the direction of decommodifying (i.e. socialising) health-care.

To achieve an NHI will require a major class struggle, there are massively funded private corporate interests that have already begun to unleash an anti-NHI campaign. Ensuring that there is the determination and capacity in the state to go ahead with the process of rolling out an NHI will need reinforcement through popular struggle – on the ideological and practical fronts. Health-care workers and professionals will need to play an active role.

Here, too, it is obvious that a centrist reformist position is liable to prevaricate and back down in the face of opposition and explore, instead, the impossible dream of “improving” the public health-care system while leaving the dominant private health-care market largely intact.

In this struggle it needs to be constantly pointed out that it is not just the public health-care system that is battling – the number of South Africans covered by medical aids is now 14% down from 25% in 1994. And with rising medical aid costs, even those who are covered are increasingly finding out that they have used up their benefits long before the end of the year. This is why we say that it is the totality of the health-care reality (public AND private) that needs to be rescued and transformed.

In the struggle to transform the health-care system and advance towards the implementation of an NHI, the SACP will also be taking up all of the issues we have raised in our Red October campaigns:

- The defence of the public health-care system, including the struggle to reverse the contracting out of key services;
- The proper compensation of workers in the sector, and vigilance by workers in the sector against victimisation and corruption by senior management;
- Active community participation in hospital boards and other participatory structure.

All four of these critical sites of radical transformation (the economic growth path, education, our spatial economy, and health-care) require a COMBINATION of state-led capacity and resourcing AND working class and popular mobilisation. It will require the progressive assertion of working class hegemony in all key sites of power in our society – the state, the economy, the ideological front, and in social sectors and communities.

Neither a centrist-reform agenda with its emphasis on piece-meal, ameliorative redistribution and “delivery”, striking a “balance” between all classes and sectoral interests, nor a left sectarian position which sees opposition to the present state as the key priority - is capable of providing the strategic, ideological and organisational impetus to address the key revolutionary tasks that confront us in the current context. It is precisely here that the SACP has a major responsibility.

In combating the influence of centrist-reformism (possibly still the dominant if temporarily disorganised ideology within the ANC-led movement), it is important that the SACP advances a politics of working class HEGEMONY in all sites of power...not least in the state.

5. The struggle for working class hegemony in the state

Over the last several years, and largely in opposition to neo-liberal demands for a “lean and mean” state, the SACP and the broader ANC-led movement have been advancing the perspective of a “**developmental state**”. This perspective (however diversely understood) has gained currency within the ANC and within government itself. Amongst other things, the advocacy of a “developmental state” helped to buttress resistance to the late-1990s attempt to drive large-scale privatisation of our key state owned enterprises.

At its 2005 National General Council, the ANC adopted an important resolution on the developmental state which noted two key features of the state that we should seek to build in South Africa. In the first place (and in common with “developmental” states in East Asia like South Korea), the ANC resolution called for a state that had the capacity and will to actively intervene in the economy to shape and lead an industrial policy, in particular. But, secondly, the ANC resolution called for a **democratic** developmental state that helped to empower popular mobilisation and organisation, and that was defended, in turn, by mobilised popular forces, notably the working class and poor. The resolution noted, specifically, that in many other developmental states, the privileged axis was between the upper layers of the state bureaucracy and domestic capital. In our situation the key axis, it asserted, needed to be between the state and popular power.

Clearly, this perspective is one supported by the SACP. Equally clearly, it is a perspective that remains largely **aspirational**. To speak of the South African state as “developmental” is, for the moment, more a description of what we want, than a description of what exists. The struggle for working class hegemony in the state is a struggle for a **democratic developmental state** that supports and is supported by popular mass forces.

In the present context, the key challenges in the struggle for working class hegemony over the state lie:

- In the struggle to introduce a **progressive, strategic discipline across all three spheres of government, and across the proliferation of parastatal entities** (SOEs, public utilities, agencies, developmental finance institutions, regulators, etc.); and
- In an intensified **political** (and not just moral) class struggle against **corruption and related phenomena like patronage networks** in the public sector, and between the public and private sectors.

These two priorities of working class struggle within the state are organically linked. One of the critical terrains for building a radical, working-class led developmental state is that of exposing and seeking to roll back and disrupt the intersection between the holding of public office and business interests, and to defeat the corrupting influence that this has had, and continues to have, on our movement as a whole.

Some of the key manifestations of the impact of the intersection between public office and business interests in the post-1994 state include the following:

- The extensive corporatisation of the state;
- The “tenderisation” of the state procurement processes; and
- The consequent emergence of “tenderpreneurs” – including the use of incumbency in particular positions in the state to “throw the javelin” (i.e. to “throw” public resources into a network of friends, family and other connections so that a comfortable personal transit can be made from the public sector to the private – where the “javelin”, or at least a share of it, can then be personally retrieved).

5.1 The corporatisation of the state

In the wake of the defeat of the late 1990s privatisation drive, the “1996 class project” never gave up on the objective of strengthening the hegemony of capital over our new democratic state through strengthening the organic links between a new political elite and big capital.

This included:

- The intensive **corporatisation** of state-owned enterprises through strengthening the power of boards and restructuring the relationship between government and these entities, which increasingly operated as private companies and sites for accumulation on behalf of capital in general and specifically an emerging BEE capitalist stratum. In the course of which the SOEs often failed to respond to the strategic developmental mandate of government;
- The related “**agentification**” of the state, with an increasing proliferation of “public” autonomous agencies, including economic, technical and safety regulators, normally hived off from departments, also with their own boards, executives, and “corporate” headquarters.

Government departments are often turned into beggars at the doors of the boards of SOEs and agencies. The boards, in turn, often hide behind their “fiduciary duties” in order to ignore or deliberately undermine departmental directives. Of course, we are not arguing that public agencies, where they exist, should be lavish or populist with their spending. Clearly fiduciary duties are important, especially where public money is involved. But, quite often, behind the smokescreen of “autonomy” and “fiduciary duty”, what we have seen is lavish expenditure, the absence of clear developmental priorities, and self-enrichment.

These tendencies are accelerated by the fact that the boards of these entities are typically populated by business and especially BEE types, with active marginalisation of representatives from NGOs, trade unions, and communities. What is more, while there has been an increase in the number of “public” agencies, there is often a small and relatively restricted coterie of business and BEE personalities who circulate between boards, or who occupy several – and in some cases dozens - of boards both public and private simultaneously.

Also typically embedded in the operations of these institutions (and indeed of many line departments) is a web of private consultants and “service” providers who also tend to bring a thoroughly capitalist ethos into what is nominally a “public” sector.

These processes of corporatisation and “agentification”, and all of the accompanying negative tendencies, have not just occurred at the national level. In

many cases, they are often more numerous and more problematic in the provincial sphere of governance.

The outcome of this is that there are multiple centres of power, with no clear overarching co-ordinating strategy, whether at national or provincial level. It is important, as we discuss the question of building working class hegemony on a terrain of the national democratic revolution, to analyse the implications of these multiple centres of (class) power. In these entities there are billions of rands worth of state resources.

We are not arguing that a quasi-corporate character for our major SOEs is necessarily always to be rejected. One argument for such a corporate “persona” is that it enables public entities like Transnet, Eskom and ACSA to raise off-budget funding on the private (and often international) money markets. At a time when we are seeking to sustain our R787 million infrastructure spend, while dealing with a recession and significantly diminished tax returns (the current tax shortfall is estimated to be R23 billion), the ability to raise off-budget capital at reasonably favourable rates to sustain our developmental agenda is not an insignificant consideration.

Likewise, we need to assess the actual performance of many agencies. For example, the Air Traffic Navigational Services (ATNS), by functioning as a public agency, has been able to focus on its critical public responsibilities (professional air traffic control services AND the training of air traffic controllers – not just from SA, but from throughout Africa and the Middle East). As an agency it has been able to operate with a clearer strategic focus and a higher level of professionalism in a technically demanding area than might have been the case were it locked into the sometimes cumbersome bureaucracy of a line department.

However, notwithstanding these observations, the SACP needs to open up an urgent discussion within our movement and within government, with the following issues being highlighted:

- *The need to conduct a comprehensive audit and evaluation of the numerous “public” entities – including SOEs, public utilities, DFIs and agencies in all spheres of government. Collectively and independently are they advancing our developmental agenda? Are all of them fulfilling an effective role? Do they all have clear mandates? Can we consolidate many of them?*
- *Is the governance model – typically an “independent board” – appropriate? How do we ensure better alignment between government strategic priorities and the culture and assumptions of parastatal boards?*

- *If a board type structure is appropriate in some cases, is it appropriate in all cases? For example, do public utilities (eg. essentially non-profit making entities, reliant on public subsidies, like Metrorail, as opposed to an SOE like ACSA) need a board? Even more pertinently, do safety regulators (eg. SA Maritime Safety Agency, or the Civil Aviation Authority) require corporate “boards” often dominated by business interests?*
- *Is the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) assisting, or undermining, our endeavour to ensure a developmental strategic discipline across the parastatal sector? To what extent does the PFMA hijack public entities into a misguided profit-maximising agenda?*
- *What is our experience with economic regulators (eg. NERSA, National Ports Regulator, ICASA)? Do they help to ensure a coherent strategic developmental agenda, or do they undermine it?*
- *What are the respective roles of DPE, line departments, and sector regulators? What, if anything, can be improved?*
- *How do we use the Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation functions in the Presidency to instil greater coordination and a progressive strategic discipline across the state and parastatal sector?*

5.2 Corrupting the state and our movement

Corporatisation in itself does not equal corruption, but it opens up huge potential spaces for corruption, especially given the increased intersection between government and business interests fostered by the 1996 class project. (This is an intersection that is now being deepened everywhere with the increasing dependency of national capital on national states for rescue packages, stimulus packages, buy-outs, etc., in the current global recession.)

The SACP needs to intensify the struggle against corruption, both inside and outside the state. Fighting corruption is not merely a moral crusade, important as the moral dimension in fighting corruption is. Fighting corruption must be a major and principled political struggle, not least in the present, based on the following considerations:

- It is not enough to expose corruption, it is also critical to transform the underlying structural conditions that produce and reproduce it;
- In the recent past, it has been proceeds from corrupt practices, or at the very least from the problematic abuse of public office, that have found their way into the war-chests of competing factions within our movement.

The key task of the SACP and the working class as a whole is to swiftly deal with the potential for new tendencies to emerge within the state and broader movement. The organised working class, particularly but not exclusively in the public and parastatal sector, has a crucial role to play in exercising vigilance against corrupt practices, whether at the senior management level or in the lower echelons. Already there are important examples of this role – see, for instance, SATAWU’s key role in recently exposing senior executive malpractice in SAA.

5.3 Private business interests, the state and the dangers of a “new anti-left tendency”

The relative defeat of the “1996 class project” and the restoration within our movement of a new climate of openness has, as we have noted in earlier sections of this paper, created a favourable situation for the left to advance its perspectives within the movement and within government. What is more, given the global capitalist crisis, and given the paradox of our own 15 years of democracy in which, despite massive reformist “delivery”, the systemic transformation of SA has not occurred – it is only really the left that is able to provide a coherent analysis and a coherent programmatic perspective on the way forward. Many comrades within the broad movement increasingly recognise and appreciate this fact.

However, it would be surprising if everyone were happy with this reality. A left perspective and programme of action – the struggle against corruption not just in moralising words, but in actually addressing the systemic features that facilitate corruption – will be threatening to certain class interests and personal ambitions within our movement. We can, therefore, expect the emergence of new anti-left tendencies. Already there are straws in the wind, early signs of such tendencies, including the apparent inverse of the “1996 class project” - put schematically, the “1996 class project” actively used newly acquired access to state power to leverage a “slice of the cake” in business (in exchange for opening up possibilities for accumulation for established capital). While the relative marginalisation of the “1996 class project” may have sidelined some of this activity for the present, there are some signs of an emergent “new **tendency**” in our movement in which the inverse begins to happen – previously accumulated BEE capital is now used to try to capture both our movement and the state.

For the moment, what we are referring to as a potential “new tendency” lacks the relative ideological and organisational coherence of the former “1996 class project”. Various ideological kites are being flown nonetheless – including an appeal to a more narrow “Africanist” ideology in which, for instance, there is an attempt to turn our long-established movement commitment to understanding the core **national**

motive forces of the revolution to be “blacks in general and Africans in particular” into a guideline, not for mass-based organisational and mobilisational priorities, but for entitlement and leadership contests. While bearing some resemblance to the rather more abstract but elaborate “African renaissance” theme advanced as a key pillar of the “1996 class project”, this new (or rather re-invented) strain of Africanism lacks any theoretical substance and is a rather brazen instrument for deployment and succession battles.

None of this should surprise us. As we noted earlier, the front of forces mobilised against the “1996 class project” in the run-up to Polokwane included a diversity of tendencies, some of which did not have any principled or ideological difference with the “1996 class project”. For these, Polokwane was just the clash between two competing emerging capitalist class fractions, sharing the same accumulation and anti-working class agenda.

The new elitist tendency within our movement does not seek to abolish the (class) instruments and power built by the 1996 class project in both our movement and state, but seeks to lay its hands on these instruments to advance its own factional class interests. It must be nipped in the bud.

5.4 Transforming the criminal justice and military components of the state

In this paper, we will not dwell on the critical challenge of building working class hegemony in other key sites of the state like the critical criminal justice and military components of the state.

Suffice it to say that both the criminal justice sector and the military also suffer from the same general problems affecting the state in general. Some of these relate specifically to the factional abuse of state organs that proliferated during the period of the “1996 class project’s” dominance. Others relate to more general problems of a lack of transformation, the lack of strategic coherence, the loss of a professional and developmental ethos, and the corrosive impact of business interests on the sectors.

Once more, a combination of work within these sectors, and popular mobilisation and participation from without – through, for instance, community policing forums, street committees – is essential.

5.5 Strategic tasks confronting the SACP

Two important lessons regarding the role and responsibilities of the SACP emerge from our recent experience and from the positions advanced throughout this discussion paper.

One: Lessons from our September 2008 National Policy Conference – Looking back to our September 2008 National Policy Conference discussions and resolutions, it is possible to realise how influential the Conference has proved to be. Almost all of the key resolutions have been implemented or have been strongly embodied in the ANC's election manifesto and government's recently published Medium Term Strategic Framework. The ability of the Party to achieve this level of **strategic** impact has had much to do with our refusal, collectively, to be hi-jacked into a media-sponsored campaign to provoke a crisis within the Party around the **tactical** question of whether we should contest elections in our own right, or not. This is where the media was trying to drive us this time last year.

It is important to remember this, because, once again, the media (but obviously backed by other ideological interests) is seeking to turn our forthcoming Special National Conference into a divisive show-down around the same **tactical** electoral question, or a similar divisive show-down on the deployment of party leaders. No-one is arguing that either the tactical question of our electoral participation, or the tactical question of leadership deployments is unimportant – but what we cannot allow (again as Lenin liked to remind comrades) is for every tactical question to be turned into a diversionary crisis within the Party that calls into question our strategic perspectives.

While not outlawing any debate or discussion, it is imperative that we do not allow the huge strategic possibilities and responsibilities of the Party (as outlined in this discussion document) to be drowned out and undermined by a lack of strategic focus at our Special National Conference in December.

Two: The struggle for working class hegemony and our multi-class movement – it is important that as communists we are clear that working class HEGEMONY doesn't mean working class exclusivity (still less party chauvinism). Working class hegemony means the ability of the working class to provide a consistent strategic leadership (politically, economically, socially, organisationally, morally – even culturally) to the widest range of social forces – in particular, to the wider working class itself, to the broader mass of urban and rural poor, to a wide range of middle strata, and in South African conditions, to many sectors of non-monopoly capital. Where it is not possible to win over individuals on the narrow basis of class interest, it can still be possible to win influence on the basis of intellectual and moral integrity (compare, for instance, our consistent ability, particularly as the Party, to mobilise over many decades a small minority of whites during the struggle against

white minority rule). This kind of hegemonic ability is different from a “balancing” act, a “redistributive” programme so beloved by centrist reformism. It is not a question of striking deals with different classes – slicing up the cake.

It is a question of advancing a strategic, radical programme of transformation that increasingly makes sense and inspires the widest range of social forces in our society. Over the course of the past year-and-a-half, we have once more demonstrated to ourselves the role that the SACP can play, working together with its allies, in achieving key elements of such an hegemony.

In short, the struggle for working class hegemony is not an alternative to the multi-class character of our national democratic struggle – on the contrary, it is the precondition for its successful advance, consolidation and defence.

THROUGH A MASS-DRIVEN, STATE-LED PROGRAMME OF RADICAL
TRANSFORMATION - LET US BUILD WORKING CLASS HEGEMONY IN ALL KEY SITES
OF POWER!

Course: Anti-Imperialism, War and Peace

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